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Notes: Chapel Address: The Law, 1960

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THEME  

The how I

1. With the singing of this hymn this morning we are moving into a strange, dark and holy land — into the world B.C. into an age in which the modern world is singularly ill at ease — afraid to alone.

2. This is the world of Simeon — the lightening of the divine will and the thunder of divine anger — this is the law of God — and every man of all time and all place, stands condemned under it. This is the holy insurmountable hill on which no man can climb alone.

3. A few sentences on the basis of the hymn — the first four commandments — the first table. No other God — no destroyer of God — none which is God itself — no forbear of them by not worshipping — first table of the law.

4. Centered in God — the vertical dimension of the life of man — this we must know first do before we do anything else. We must straighten out our relationship to God — not to do that is sin — St. Ambrose — and the Sermon on the Mount is always brooding, by its very title first four commandments we have a thousand things — we crush life into many pieces — we eat the life — life between us, and known.

4. We are an unloved — ideal — and in dark and lonely places — we know if we know nothing else.
THEME: The Law II

1. We have now sung the second table of the law. Embrace all the horizontal relationships of life—life is a T-structure. Table II refers to broken, family, marriage, parent, property, neighbors—all the people whom we loved as we go through life. Our relationship to all these is under the Law of God — to be determined and directed by His will and by nothing else.

2. These are the thoughts the world sees first: our relationship to God may often be secret and hidden from the world. But Table II is an open book—everyone can see how we are doing in the horizontal areas of life—by these men and God—often judge us.

3. And yet there is a surprising difference: never judge the door by its deed—God judges. The broken door by the door—here is the profound connection between Table I and Table II. No man can do anything about Table II until he has fulfilled Table I in the sight of God. God I now mean it cannot be fulfilled only by the poor and holy heart and He happy, well.

4. And the man can never be of service—how he stages our account, continuing tragedy. He sees God's will in history and in man do nothing about it.
1. And now we come to the heart of the matter.
   "God thus communed with man therein.
   To show the child of man, thy sin."
   
2. Thus is the word which sums it all up.
   "Sin" - we learn at Table I - we learn at Table II
   and if we have a shred of honesty in our hearts we must say:
   "This I do know, We have broken every last one of these,
   we have a 100% record of failure - not once have we made the grade.
   
3. Now - strangely - the word "Sin" - this is the
   one word in the vocabulary of God which our sophisticated
   brilliancy can only dimly and blurrily apprehend - this is the word we
   cannot understand.
   
4. And why? Because it hits us where we live -
   our pride - our self-sufficiency - our high and
   mighty heart. And so we have to descend to the magnificent
  Provider of the power of the Holy Spirit - the name of our hymn:
   "Help us, Lord J.C.
   for us, and make our hearts in Thee.
   
5. Strangely, isn't it? and how like God - all
   these human, impossible demands - all the love and
   all the sin - all of the humanism of life -
   only the principle and purpose in the theology of
   the Cross - the humanly, humbly incredible miracle of
   the Cross, the miracle of the forgiveness of
   sin, the divine self-sacrifice of Table I, and
   Table II - the breaking of the bread of sin, its
   return to Bread - to the Father's heart, through
1. With the singing of this hymn this morning we are moving into a strange, dark and holy land - into the world B.C. - into an area in which the modern world is singularly ill at ease - afraid and alone.

2. This is the world of Sinai - the lightening of the divine will and the thunder of divine anger - this is the law of God - and every man, of all times and all places, stands condemned under it. This is the Holy insurmountable hill which no man can climb alone.

3. A few sentences on the lesson of the hymn - the first three commandments - the first table. No other Gods - no desecration of God's name which is God Himself - no forgetting of Him by not worshipping - first table of the Law centered in God - the vertical dimensions of the life of man. This we must know and do before we do anything else. We must straighten out our relationship to God - not to do that is sin - St. Ambrose - and the seriousness of sin is always brokenness - by ignoring these first 3 commandments we break a thousand things -
we smash life into many pieces - we eat the life-line between earth and heaven.

4. Here is an unattainable ideal - and in dark and lonely moments - we know it as we know nothing else - (stanzas 5 - 10) Lord have mercy.

The LAW II

1. We have now sung the second table of the law. Embraces all the horizontal relationships of life - life is a T-square. Table II refers to fellowmen, family, marriage, parents, property, neighbors - all the people whom we touch as we go through life - our relationship to all these is under the law of God - to be determined and directed by His Will - and by nothing else.

2. These are the things the world sees first - our relationship to God may often be secret and hidden from the world - but Table II is an open book - everyone can see how we are doing in the horizontal areas of life - by these men - and God - often judge us.

3. And yet - there is a dismaying difference - men judge the doer by his deed - God judges
the deed by the doer - here is the profound connection between Table I and Table II - no man can do anything about Table II until he has fulfilled Table I in the sight of God. God's law makes its demands on the inmost heart and wills - it can be fulfilled only by the pure and holy heart and the happy surrendered will.

4. And this we can never do of ourselves - here lies our ancient, continuing tragedy - we see God's holiness and we can do nothing about it - Sinai is a dark and lonely place - Lord have (stanzas 11 - 12)

THE LAW: III

1. And now we come to the heart of the matter "God these commandments gave therein To show thee, child of man, thy sin"

2. There is the words which sums it all up - "Sin"-we look at Table I - we look at Table II and if we have a shred of honesty in our hearts we must say: "There, that does it. We have broken every last one of these - We have a 100% record of failure - not once have we made the grade -
3. Now- strangely - the word "sin" - this is the one word in the vocabulary of God to which our sophisticated brilliant age is singularly deaf and blind - this is the word we cannot understand.

4. And why? Because it hits us where we live - our pride - our self-sufficing - our high and wayward intelligence - and so we have to descend to the magnificent lowliness of the final stanzas of our hymn: "Help us, Lord J. C. for we, A Mediator have in Thee"

5. Stange, isn't it? and how like God - all these humanly impossible demands - all this Law - and all this sin - all of the humanness of life - only the prelude and preface to the theology of the Cross - the Humaanly incredible miracle of the Cross, the miracle of the forgiveness of sin, the divine fulfillment of Table I and Table II - the loosening of the bonds of sin, the return not to Sinai but to the Father's house, through our Lord Jesus Christ. God has had mercy.